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FIRST-HAND IMPRESSIONS OF JAPAN

J. I. C. CLARKE. **Japan at First Hand.** xxxvi and 482 pp.; ills., index. Dodd, Mead & Co., New York, 1918. \$2.50. 8½ x 5½ inches.

Mr. Clarke writes with an attractive style and comes to his task in a sympathetic attitude and with a mind open and impressionable.

He sees the beauty and feels the charm of that picturesque land, studies its quaint and curious customs, and redraws for us delightful pictures of Japanese peasant life—the fishing village, the rice planting, the tea picking, the cherry blossom festival, the geisha girl, and the *Nô* dance.

He also writes of modern Japan. Referring to the cotton spinning and weaving, he says that "the industry is immensely profitable, earnings up to thirty per cent being constantly reported." "Cheap and abundant female labor," he declares, "accounts for much of this."

Some hint is given of the very unsatisfactory conditions that prevail in the factory life of Japan. In some of the better sort of factories an attempt is made to look after the welfare of the workers, but the conditions on the whole are probably the worst in the factory world. Out of a million of workers 73 per cent, we are told by one student, are female—mostly girls under 20 years of age—and children. The hours range from 11 to 14 a day. Mr. Clarke states that "in most mills work is practically continuous, a night force and a day force changing ranks at intervals." "On the whole," says Mr. Clarke, "the system leaves much to be desired. It was surely corporate greed which in peace time made all-night work take up half the women's time in a year. It doubled the capacity of the plant, but it halved the vitality of the workers. . . . And the wage is so small that an American or even an English factory hand, even a French or German worker, would laugh it to scorn." Mr. Clarke does not mention it, but the fact may be stated that legislation designed to improve factory conditions has been held up by those interested in the profits of these factories, who also control the government.

Attention may be called to the chapter on "Parliament and Politics in Japan," wherein we are reminded of the fact, now pretty generally known, that Japan "is still in the rear of pure representative government." Although Parliament may pass laws, "the date of their promulgation is reserved to the Emperor." Instead of "Emperor" we should substitute "the oligarchy that advises the Emperor."

The administration of the government in Korea the author seemed to find conducted in the interest of the natives. Other reports do not agree with this. There can be no doubt that Japanese rule in Korea is more efficient than that of the Koreans, but the question still arises: Is the principle of the self-determination of peoples one to be recognized in shaping the policies of government? Probably we shall have to answer this question in the near future in deciding the destiny of the Philippines. It can scarcely be denied, however, that, if there are any treaties that have been made "scraps of paper," those relating to Korea deserve a place at the head of the list.

E. T. WILLIAMS

COTTON IN BRITISH WEST AFRICA

N. M. PENZER. **Cotton in British West Africa including Togoland and the Cameroons.** With an introduction by Viscount Milner. 53 pp.; maps, bibliogr. The Federation of British Industries, London, 1920. 5s. 9½ x 6 inches.

The Federation of British Industries, an organization whose purpose is the fostering of increased production, especially of raw materials within the Empire, is issuing a series of monographs on the most important of these materials the supply of which affects the prosperity of the Empire as a whole. The present study is the second in this series, one treating of "Rubber in Malaya" having already appeared.

This memorandum, though brief, is of value for three things; its geographical description of the regions concerned, including the late German colonies and the Lake Chad district—all from a fresh viewpoint, that of the possibility of cotton culture as affected by soil, climate, labor, and transportation; its recognition of the influence of such economic factors as cotton raising upon international relations; and, by no means least, the very full bibliography that accompanies the text, in which may be found, arranged chronologically, practically all the important treatises on cotton and cotton culture, from 1881 to 1920.